

British Give the Evil Eye to Arms and

By Karl E. Meyer

Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Dec. 10 — American officials expressed pique today at the failure of the British government to dispel the notion that Henry Kuss is somehow a diabolic super-salesman bent on destroying this country's aviation industry.

Kuss is U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Logistics. He concluded a brief visit here Thursday in which he discussed possible British purchase of American F-111 swing-wing jet fighters.

Typical of the way some Labor and Conservative members of Parliament have reacted was the statement by Laborite Maurice Edelman describing the Kuss visit as part of a general plan for worldwide domination of the arms industry.

Americans retort that Kuss is indeed in charge of selling arms overseas but has no domination plans and came here in response to an invitation to provide more information on the fighter.

British government sources confirm that Kuss's visit was informational and that no strong-arm techniques were evident. But Americans note that Roy Jenkins, Minister of Aviation, failed to make this clear when questioned in Parliament on Wednesday.

As a result of the Kuss visit, the government is expected to announce next week that it is asking the United States to extend the option deadline on the jet fighter beyond next Jan. 1.

One reason Britain wants the delay is that a long-term defense review is still under way. Defense Minister Denis Healey is expected to announce the results in a white paper next February.

Purchase of the long-range jet is directly related to the decision Britain must make on whether to maintain or cut

back defense commitments east of Suez.

The government is expected to disclose more details of defense policy in debate Monday. This will come a few days before release of another basic document—a long-awaited report on the future of the British aviation industry.

Members of Parliament, particularly those representing constituencies with aircraft factories, feel that reliance on the F-111 will doom the industry and jeopardize English-French aeronautical cooperation.

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If the F-111 is ordered, it means that Rolls Royce, appears nearly certain that whose Spey engine has been the plane will be powered by under consideration, would an American engine. This lose a \$150-million order. De-

by cost and it has been urging that Britain politics argue heavy buy the Mirage IV jet-bomber, ey. which can be powered by the right nppy because Spey engine.
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